

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 2, 2018

The Honorable Alex Azar  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

As student athletes take the national stage during "March Madness," we write to urge action regarding opioid abuse among collegiate student athletes. Too often, college athletes are left on the sidelines after being prescribed opioids for sports related injuries. We must do everything possible to make sure students have the resources they need to fight this vicious epidemic. We must recognize this disturbing trend, impacting communities across the country.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that opioids are the single leading cause of drug-related deaths, causing 42,249 fatalities in 2016 alone, 5,376 of which were between the ages of 15-24. The troubling rise in casualties from opioid related casualties affects communities across the nation without regard to age, gender, race, ethnicity, or economic status. While we are encouraged that the current Administration has declared the opioid crisis a national emergency, we believe there is still more to be done. It is pivotal that these athletes are included in the national strategy.

In the United States, collegiate student athletes and their families should not have to worry about students becoming addicted to opioids because of a sports related injury. Of the more than 460,000 student athletes competing at U.S. colleges and universities, many are being prescribed opioids after injuries. We respectfully request that the Administration provide the following:

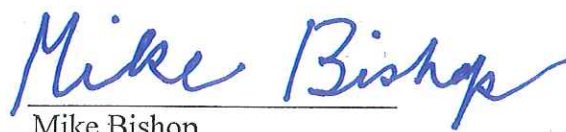

- Up-to-date data and information on actions taken to help student athletes who are prescribed opioids;
- Reports on current pilot programs available for student health providers, athletic directors, and athletes; and,
- Information on what more can be done to help students on college campuses fight this epidemic.

As we continue to combat the ongoing opioid epidemic, we must leave no stone unturned when it comes to helping victims seek treatment. We appreciate your attention to this important matter and look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

  
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Josh Gottheimer  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

  
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Ryan Costello  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

  
Stephanie Murphy  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS  
Mike Bishop  
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Randy Hultgren  
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Ann McLane Kuster  
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